

# OBSERVATIONS PREPARATORY

TO THE USE OF

Dr. MYERSBACH'S *Medicines* :

IN WHICH

The efficacy of certain GERMAN PRESCRIPTIONS is ascertained, by facts and experience.

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*Falstaff.* Boy! What said the Doctor to my water?

*Page.* He said, Sir, the water itself was a good healthy water: but for the party that owned it, he might have more diseases than he knew for.

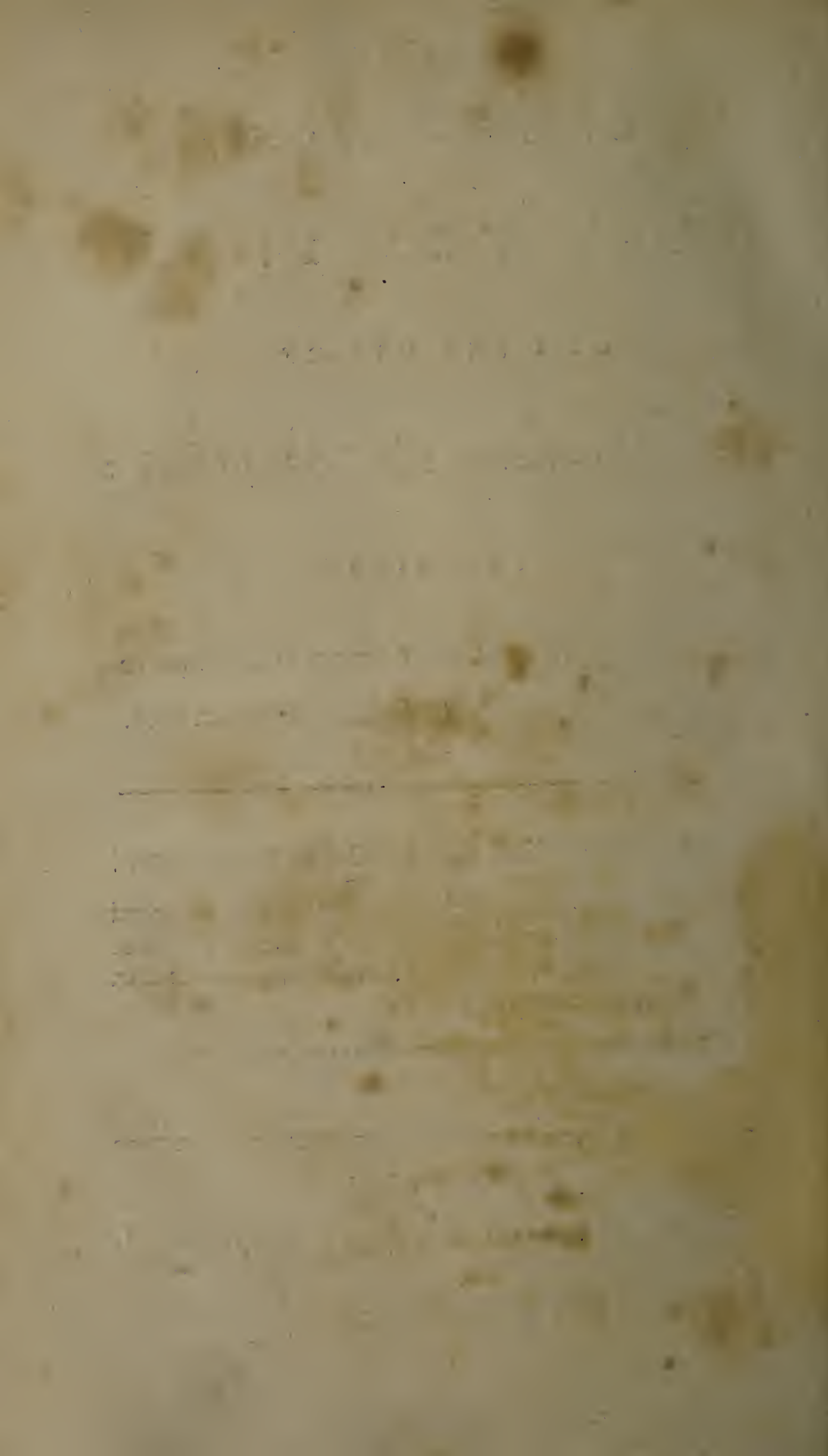
SHAKESPEARE'S HENRY IV.

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L O N D O N :

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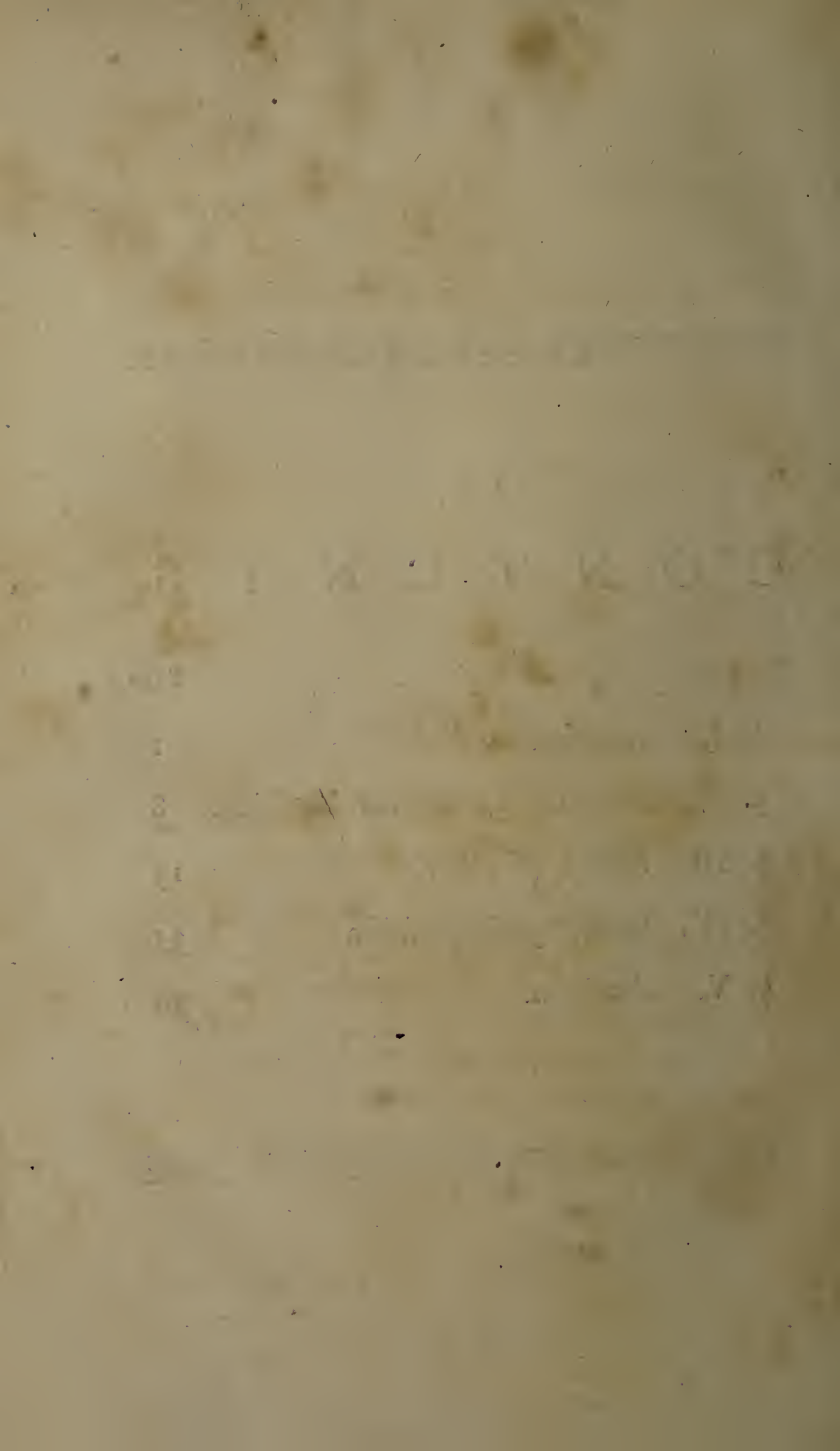


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§. I.

## INTRODUCTION.



HOEVER is engaged in Medicine, with that compassion for the miseries of his fellow creatures, which a physician and a friend to mankind ought to feel, must often lament over the frailty of the human constitution, and the violence and variety of the diseases to which it is liable; some peculiarly affecting the functions of the body, some the powers of the mind, and some, too often, both. Thus interwoven with the constitution, he will find it requisite to exert the utmost efforts of skill, to discover the causes of all diseases, to understand their symptoms, and ascertain the most probable means of removing them: he will see these symptoms daily varying, and as often requiring a variation of remedies; that those which were first indicated, must be omitted, and others substituted, in order to reconduct his patient, as soon as the operations of nature will permit, into the port of health and happiness.

The human body is a compound machine, constituted of innumerable distinct parts, which depend upon the proper action of each other for the preservation and health of the whole ; which not only undergo changes in the same person at different periods of age, but are also attended with certain peculiarities in different persons and sexes ; and which are liable to be affected by the mode of living, the season of the year, the temperature of the air, and a thousand other causes operating upon the mind or body, or upon both ; and producing effects, the causes of which can only be justly ascertained by a long and careful acquaintance with medicine in all its various branches ; these effects are, indeed, so various, that physicians of eminence have declared, that two patients exactly similar, and requiring the same precise method of treatment, have never occurred during their practice.

Whilst the different parts of the human frame perform their action in a state of health, the fluids undergo certain separations, which are necessary to the support of the body ; and the superfluous are discharged by various outlets, amongst which the *urinary passages* constitute a considerable one. But as the state of these fluids principally depends upon the state of the solid parts of the body, and the action of the vessels ; it is evident, that the state of the excreted fluids cannot be ascertained, without



a knowledge of the action of those vessels upon which the excretions depend, and can be known only by the state of the pulse. And as the body is perpetually varying, from changes in the air, diet, exercise, passions of the mind, and a thousand other circumstances which vary the appearances in the excreted fluids, we may confidently affirm, that the state of the urine, liable as it is to so many variations in health, cannot afford a just indication of the state of the body when under disease, without a previous knowledge, not only of the human body in health, but likewise of the various changes produced upon it from different causes, in its sound, as well as its diseased state.\*

Supposing it were sometimes possible to attain a general knowledge of a disease by urine,† or by any other excreted fluid, would it not be judicious in the physician, to acquire the most particular information respecting the causes and the symptoms of the disease, by the pulse, the constitution of the patient, and other means, as well as by the urine; which, alone, must be fallacious,

\* Itaque ut ex urinarum inspectione aliquid minus dubie dijudicemus in ordine ad Morbos, et artem Medicam, quopado se habere debeat, urina in naturali statu, et unde pendeat hic idem naturalis status ejus, intelligamus oportet. BELLINI de Urinis.

† In reality (says D. HEBERDEN, *Med. Trans.* vol. 2. p. 505.) it is but in few Maladies, that the Urine affords a Practitioner much useful information.

fallacious,‡ because it is perpetually varying in the most healthy person? When these various indications are neglected by the physician, may we not conclude that he is ignorant of the human body, and the laws upon which life and health depend; and consequently either unacquainted with a rational mode of relieving it when disordered, or else extreamly indifferent respecting the health of his patient?

It is true, it may be urged, that a person who is ignorant of the human constitution, and the various causes of disease which act upon it, and who invariably prescribes one sett of medicines for all diseases, can have no occasion to know the causes and symptoms of any disease, the state of the pulse, or of any thing else connected with the body. If this be admitted, and at the same time if similar remedies are indiscriminately employed in all diseases, of what use can the urine be? To deceive the public, however, it is necessary to preserve some appearance of knowledge; and when a deception has once prevailed over the understanding of the people, the more irrational it is, the more implicitly and firmly it is believed; and while the wonderfulness of it gains admiration, the credulous are continually, though unconsciously, liable to substitute tales for fact, till prodigies are circulated as familiar truths.

‡ BELLINI de Urinis, p. 3. (Uromantes inanes.)



Deceptions, similar in cause and effect, have prevailed over the understandings of men in all ages, and in every department of life ; marvellous and improbable stories, if once believed, are always admired and propagated : and thus artful men have found dupes in all ages and professions, the mind being as liable to admit poison as the body ; and before the injuries of one species of deception have opened the eyes of the public, another starts up, and for a certain space of time equally detains its votaries in bondage. Strong indeed must be that bias, which leads a man to apply to a stranger, and repose, in his hands, the dearest of blessings ; and callous must be the heart of him, who, ignorant of medicine, trifles with the pains, the miseries, and the lives of his fellow-creatures, for the sake of gratifying a mercenary disposition.

I am sensible it may be said, that many a mountebank and water-conjurer, driven to seek a livelihood by poverty and distress, have assumed a profession, for the sake of present bread, which they at first little imagined could have gained so many votaries, and consequently victims to their ignorance. I have seen the rise and progress of many such pretenders ; and could relate many incidents and ingenious methods of deception, were not health and life too serious for diversion, and mankind too ready to improve in deceit, by adding to their own, that

that of others. It is no crime to have been poor; but whether poison be retailed, or sold by wholesale, the heart of the vender is equally criminal.

One would be apt to imagine, after so many deceptions which men have been led into, that in so important a concern as health, they would seriously consider, that though a quack medicine may sometimes cure, it more frequently injures the constitution through life, and impairs, not unfrequently, the vigor and health of succeeding generations. Mistakes in ordinary matters may be remedied; but a body ruined by injurious treatment, is a monument of folly, whose inscription the infatuated object painfully pauses over as long as he lives. Such instances have so often occurred to me, that I think it my duty to expose to the public, some of the practices which have lately deluded a great part of this city; the effects of which I find daily more injurious to the people, having, in my own practice, lately met with many persons, whose affecting treatment has been such, as demands the tear of humanity, and that sympathy, which the distress of our fellow-creatures excites, even when it arises from their own imprudence and misconduct.

Though



Though these medicines improperly applied may be attended with considerable mischiefs, they are, nevertheless, such as may be useful, when their virtues are distinctly ascertained ; I have therefore given, in the second section, the formulæ of the German Dispensatory, for the use of those who suppose them capable of very wonderful and salutary effects.

The third section is employed in relating some cases which have come under my own notice ; and I have related them as they occurred, without selecting the most fatal, or most successful only ; that the public may judge of the comparative qualities of these remedies, with those of other quacks ; and of the judgment of the practitioner, who indiscriminately administers them to all ages and sexes, and in all diseases.

The diseases and remedies suggest some reflections in the fourth section, with which I have concluded this address ; and which I have treated with brevity, on account of the more general reflections offered by writers upon the subject of empiricism, and particularly by Dr. Tissot in his *Avis au peuple*.



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§. II.

FORMULÆ of GERMAN MEDICINES.

**T**HOUGH it has been my lot to have been consulted in a multitude of cases, wherein Dr. MYERSBACH's medicines have been exhibited, I have seldom had the happiness to meet with exceptions among those in my practice, who have not thought themselves worse when they forsook him, than when they first placed themselves under his care. There are, however, individuals, who entertain the highest opinion of his judgment; and to such it may not prove unacceptable, to see, in plain English, by what means the cures, so pompously related, have been performed. There may be a period, when the Doctor may think it most prudent to retire from the neighbourhood of those who have preserved the English character, of being taken with novelty, and imposed upon by every thing that is foreign and unaccountable; in such an exigence, it must prove an essential service to the public, to be furnished, at half price, with the same remedies as are imported at an enormous expence from Germany.

To a man who, ignorant of all medical knowledge, administers the same remedies to every patient, a vial of urine is just as good as a vial of vinegar, or any other liquid : it seems to be so with the Doctor, as he has uniformly given, in almost an hundred cases successively, of every age, of different sexes and constitutions, green drops, to which have been added the deobstruent pills. When the patient returns again, worse than at the first application, the sweet essence is usually ordered, with the red, and the antacid powders : should these likewise fail of success, and the black pills afterwards also ; the miserable patient is necessitated to apply to regular practitioners, lamenting the day that gave birth to his German connexion.

1. *Essentia dulcis, or the Sweet Essence.*

Take Foliated Tartar, two drachms ;

Loaf Sugar, two ounces ;

Water, one ounce and a half : boil these together in a glazed vessel, till the mixture acquires a brownish or dark color ; then take it from the fire, and pour upon it twelve ounces of the following menstruum, and after placing it by the fire for a day or two, let it be filtered through paper :

*The Menstruum for making the Sweet Essence.*

Take Rectified spirit of Wine, four pounds ;

Alum, powdered, eight ounces ;

Water, one pound ; mix them, and

C

distill



distill off three pounds for the menstruum above.

German writers\* have greatly commended this trifling medicine in diseases of children, to whom three drops is said to be a dose, and to adults thirty. Many authors† have pretended to the honor of inventing this essence; but its composition evinces their ignorance of chemistry: the acid of alum, which is the vitriolic, will forsake the earth it was united with, and join the alkali of the foliated tartar, whereby the earth of alum will be precipitated; and this boasted essence must therefore consist of spirit of vitriol, spirit of wine, and sugar; which mixed with a sufficient proportion of water, might constitute that well known liquor, called punch. Thirty drops of spirit of wine is a very safe dose; and happy would it be for mankind, if no one ever used above a thousand times this dose: trifling, however, as this medicine is, it may not be safe to administer it indiscriminately to children, whose stomachs often contain too large a quantity of acid; and in such cases, an addition to it may produce effects, which a person ignorant in chemistry might be at a loss to remove.

## II. *Essentia*

- \* Chr. Ernest Kleinfeld, *Detectum falsar, et Phlegiar.* p. 713.  
*Annal. Med. Phys. Wratislav. An. 1723. Mens. Dec. Cl. 14. art. 3.*  
 Jo. Ad. Raimanni, *observ. de dubia essentæ dulcis in Comm. litt. med. Norimb. an. 1734. p. 222.*  
 Hoffman. *Obs. Chym. 21. lib. iii. p. 375.*  
*Dispens. Brand, p. 84.*  
 Ernestingii *Lexicon Pharm. p. 346.*

† Vide Autores ut supra, speciatim D. Raimann.



## II. *Essentia amara the; Bitter Essence, or Green-drop.*

Take Tanfy, one ounce ;

Stonewort, Ceterach, or Hart's-tongue,

Blessed Thistle,

Lesser Centaury,

Gentian root,

Dock roots, of each three drachms ;

Pill of recent or green Oranges, half an ounce: cut these ingredients small, and add twelve ounces of rectified spirit of wine; after a few days infusion in the spirit, filter it through paper. This is a grateful bitter, perhaps equal to that, which in England goes under Stoughton's name, and in the shops is called the bitter Tincture, well known for its supposed stomachic qualities; though it may be suspected, whether the long use of spirituous bitters, may not, like spirits in general, injure the stomach. One would imagine, from the universal exhibition of these Green Drops, that Dr. MYERSBACH considers them useful in every disease under the sun, as it is the first medicine he ordered for about fifty different cases with which I have been acquainted.

## *Pilulæ Hypochondriacæ, or Hysteric Pills.*

Simplicity and elegance in prescribing, are but of modern date: the antients, less acquainted with the human œconomy, and the action of medicine, usually combined a multitude of

ingredients in one prescription ; and the Germans have not yet freed themselves from the shackles of antiquity : of this kind are the above pills, which consist of Angelica, Birthwort, Aromatic Cane, Lovage, Valerian, Zedoary, Mint, Penny-royal, Rue, Chamomile Flowers, Bay Berries, Orange pill, Myrrh, Amber, Castor, Saffron, Oil of Rue, and Oil of Amber.

If a Physician in England was to order such a composition, it would be an object of ridicule to an Apothecary's 'prentice.

*Pilulæ Polychrestæ, or the Black Pills.*

Take Extract of Opium,  
Liquorice Powder,  
Black Hellebore,  
White Hellebore, each one ounce ;  
Tartarized Soap\* three ounces ; make  
these into a mass of Pills.

One seventh part of this mass consists of Opium ; it resembles the saponaceous pill of the London Dispensatory ; and is, in ignorant hands, a very dangerous medicine. This I imagine proved so injurious in Cases 1st. and 2d. at least, from some experiments I had the melancholy occasion to make in Case 5th, I presume I have just grounds to suspect so.  
Both

\* This Soap is prepared with Salt of Tartar, and Oil of Turpentine.



Both BOERHAAVE and HOFFMAN have recommended the above in dropfies; but in some cafes of dropfy they muft prove injurious; and in any we have more fimple, and at the fame time more efficacious remedies.

*Pilulæ contra Obstructiones, Pills to remove Obstructions.*

These confift principally of Aloes and Steel, and though they may be beneficial in certain complaints, they are not lefs injurious in others, wherein I have feen them given; as in incipient hectic complaints their ftimulus has excited fpitting of blood and confumption.

*Pilulæ Purgantes, or Purging Pills.*

These chiefly contain Aloes and Jalap, or without the Aloes the purging powder is conftituted.

*Pulvis Antifpafmodicus, or the Red Powder;*

Take Salt petre,  
Vitriolated Tartar, each two ounces;  
Cinnabar, one drachm; mix, and make a powder.

*Pulvis contra acridinem; the Powder to correct Acrimony, or the Antacid Powder.*

Take Diaphoretic Antimony, two ounces;  
Burnt



Burnt Crabbs Eyes,

Burnt Shells, each one ounce; mix, and make a powder.

Similar to the foregoing, is the Bozoar powder; the addition of the Bozoar constitutes no other improvement than in the price.

*Pulvis Vitæ, or Powder of Life.*

Take Roots of Zedoary, Pimpernel,

Elecampane, Galangal,

Aromatic Cane, Avens or herb benet,

Liquorice, of each two drachms;

Harts Tongue, Speedwell, Blessed Thistle,

Flowers of lesser Centaury, of each one dr.

Senna leaves, Seeds of Anise, Fennel,

Carraway, of each one drachm and a half;

Bay Berries, three drachms;

Cinnamon, one drachm;

Cubebs, and Cardamums, each four scruples;

Mace, and Burnt harts-horn, of each two dr.

Rhapontic dock, one ounce and a half;

Rhubarb, a drachm and a half;

Cremor Tartar, three drachms;

White Sugar Candy, four ounces and a half:

mix, and make a powder.

This is a German farrago, whose pompous title, is only a cover of its insignificance.

*Balsamum Cephalicum, or Cephalic Balsam.*

Take equal quantities of Oil of Lavender,

Amber, Penny-royal, Marjoram, Sage, Rose-

mary, Savory, Mace, Rue, Mint, Origanum,

and Nutmeg; mix, and make a Balsam.

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### §. III.

#### HISTORY of CASES.

I Have already intimated my resolution of laying before the public, the cases in the order they occurred to me. If I had selected the most unfavourable cases, a just decision of Dr. MYERSBACH's success could not have been obtained; but as justice demanded the whole, it is from thence I shall leave every individual to judge for himself. I have acknowledged, that I had omitted four cases for want of proper information; and because two of them were so much indisposed before their application to Dr. MYERSBACH, as left little prospect of recovery, and their deaths could not be attributed to him. The other two were Hysteric cases; but tired with a long and fruitless attendance, they forsook, at length, the Green Drops and Pills, which every one of these patients were ordered to take.

From my period of practice, it cannot but be supposed that my share of patients must be a very small proportion of those unhappy victims, that must have suffered from indiscriminate prescription, and afterwards have consulted



Physicians of more experience and reputation than I can pretend to: I would hope, however, for the sake of humanity, that my dead list is the most formidable of all that can be produced.

### C A S E I.

In October, 1775, I attended a Gentleman in my neighbourhood violently attacked with a Hepatitis, and a difficulty of breathing. He so far recovered as to be able to remove into the country, but his breathing was still laborious: he sent several times desiring me to visit him in the country, but through some neglect I never received any message, but heard frequent favourable accounts of his improvement. I had occasion to pass by his lodging about ten days after he left London. He upbraided me for not seeing him sooner; and acquainted me, that he had been persuaded to employ a Dr. MYERSBACH, who had visited him two days before. This was the first time I heard the Doctor's name mentioned; and as I did not know any particulars of his character, I could not approve or disapprove his conduct; but advised my friend to continue while he grew better, and if he grew worse, my attendance might be commanded. About a week or ten days afterwards, I was again desired to visit this Gentleman; his case was then greatly aggravated, the urine was diminished, the breathing



ing more difficult; the belly was swelled, and a dropsy advancing, a fluctuation of water being evident. I intimated to the family the danger of the patient's life; and the next day two physicians met in consultation, but we did not repeat the meeting death having intervened.

I found in the patient's chamber, green drops, a box of pills, the sweet drops, and the red powder; but I did not then imagine that I should meet with these green drops, &c. in a hundred cases afterwards, where the complaints of the patients were totally different.

## C A S E II.

About two months afterwards, P. of White-chapel, age 56, was attacked with a difficulty of breathing, severe cough and slight expectoration, with other asthmatic symptoms, which induced him to send a vial of urine to Dr. MYERSBACH, who immediately declared, "*that the patient labored under a disorder in the liver which he would soon cure,*" and his pills and green drops were recommended to effect it. After the use of these medicines near a week, the dyspnæa, or shortness of breath, augmented, the cough became dry and violent, and every symptom of approaching dissolution appeared, on which account I was desired to visit him. When I first saw him, I did not  
D. expect

expect he would have survived the night; and his friends attended around his bed in the expectation of laying out the corps, every expiration threatening to prove the last. As I had not at this period heard Dr. MYERSBACH's name often mentioned, I did not inspect the medicines, and consequently cannot speak of their effects with precision; but I firmly believe, that if the same plan had been pursued a day or two longer, and thereby proper remedies anticipated, the patient would have died.

### C A S E III.

W. near Lombard-street, another asthmatic person, who applied to Dr. MYERSBACH soon after I had attended the last mentioned patient, had a receipt in the Doctor's hand writing, containing steel and aloes as under:

R Aloes rosatæ\* unciam unam,  
 Extracti Panchymagogi† unc. femis,  
 Limaturæ Martis, ‡subtilissime pulv.  
 drachmas duas; fiant pilulæ.

I have known eight pills ordered every two hours, as was the case with the last mentioned patient; and such frequent doses of steel may enable

\* Aloes dissolved in an infusion of Roses, which is afterwards evaporated to the consistence of an extract.

† This extract consists of Scammony, Rhubarb, Agaric, Hermodactyls Black Hellebore, and Senna. The epithet, Panchymagoga is derived from Greek, παν, all, χυμος, humour, and αγω, to draw down.

‡ Prepared Steel.



enable us to account for the dreadful situation, into which he was reduced when I first visited him.

#### C A S E IV.

In January, 1776, I attended a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Cheapside, whose valuable life is still preserved to his family, and the community. In conversation one day, he shewed me a prescription,† and asked me if it was proper for a consumption: it consisted of steel, aloes, and other stimulants,\* and without knowing his view for this interrogation, I replied I should consider it as very dangerous: he then told me that his daughter, who was of a very delicate constitution, had consulted Dr. MYERSBACH on account of some suppressed evacuation; but that after the use of these heating medicines, a cough ensued, with night sweats, and hectic fever, which soon put a period to the life of this amiable young Lady,

Case

† This consisted of Pills, composed of three articles, described in case 3, for an Asthma; and of Drops made of the essence, spirit, and extract of Wormwood, similar to what Dr. MYERSBACH prescribed for the Gentleman, who, at my request, imposed upon this water oracle, (see Case 13.)

\* Upon the injurious effects of Stimulants in consumptions, see Dr. FOTHERGILL's useful papers, in the 4th vol. of the Medical Inquiries, p. 231, and 289. Dr. FOTHERGILL has since informed me, that additional experience has farther confirmed him against Stimulants in pulmonary complaints.



## C A S E V.

In August, 1775, I was desired to visit W. of Thames-street, about 54 years old; he had laboured under a cough, and a slight difficulty of breathing and restlessness, for which he had consulted Dr. MYERSBACH about a fortnight before. When I entered the sick chamber, the patient was so near his end, and the family in such distress, that I could not collect a very accurate account of the process he had been under: I found, however, in the room the green drops, red powder, and some pills: I took the pills to be opium from the result of their use, as a sleepiness had ensued, and continued for three days when I saw him, from which he never was roused; he opened his eyes two or three times, and I think uttered a few words before he expired,

## C A S E VI.

C. a Gentleman 23 years old, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH in the beginning of January, 1776, with a vial of urine; the Doctor, after shaking it a moment, ran his hands on each side of the body of his patient from the shoulders to the abdomen as quick as possible, and with equal velocity in broken English, cried "*the pain is here, the pain is here,*" imagining, doubtless, that by encompassing so large a portion of the body, he could not fail of including

including the disordered part. After the Doctor had, in this abrupt hasty manner, guessed for some time at every part of the body as the seat of pain and disease, but the right one; the gentleman informed him, that he frequently suffered the most acute pain at the extremity of the *penis*, particularly after walking or any severe exercise; and likewise when he passed urine, which he could effect only by drops. The Doctor as quick as lightning answered, “ *Aye, Aye, Aye, you are right, I meant*  
“ *that, that is the pain you have; it is an un-*  
“ *common disorder. I have had two thousand*  
“ *patients in London, and only one (so young) with*  
“ *your disorder. It is a liver complaint; but I*  
“ *will cure you.* He then recommended him to take some pills three times every day, and also his green drops, and particularly insisted upon the use of much exercise. In compliance with these directions the patient suffered for many weeks the most excruciating pains, but his confidence in the Doctor prompted him to persevere, till worn down by the most racking pain in the parts first complained of, he addressed him by letter, and sent with it another vial of urine, upon the inspection of which, Dr. MYERSBACH declared his patient was better, “ *that there were three*  
“ *Ulcers in the Bladder, which the urine discovered;*  
“ *and that he would cure them, if his medicines*  
“ *were persisted in for three months, and plenty of*  
“ *exercise was taken.*”

This



Thus amused, the patient dragged on a miserable life to the end of February. Agony and violent inflammation in the part affected, having at length become too violent to admit of using exercise, he was necessitated to keep his bed; and from rest a mitigation of pain took place: this convinced him he had been used improperly, although Dr. MYERSBACH repeatedly insisted upon the use of exercise.

After dear bought experience, Mr. C. was too sensible how much he had been deceived to depend upon foreign emigrants. He applied to Englishmen in the profession; was cut for the stone by a Surgeon, who extracted a very large one; and he now enjoys perfect health.

There is one circumstance in the present case which should not be omitted: when Dr. MYERSBACH must have perceived the patient was convinced of his ignorance, he attempted to persuade the unhappy sufferer that he had exactly three ulcers in his bladder, which he pretended to see in his urine—What a misfortune it was, that all the urine discharged at once was not exhibited, by which the Doctor might have seen, not only the three ulcers, but the stone likewise. This reminds me of a case in the north of England, where Water-Conjurers abound. A Countryman had brought his wife's urine, and after it had been ex-  
torted

torted from him that his wife had fallen down stairs, and thereby received an injury ; the Doctor over earnest to shew his knowledge, declared it was four steps she had fallen down ; the Countryman, however, declared it was twelve : But, rejoins the Doctor, have you brought all the water ? No, replied the Countryman. Aye there it is ! concludes the Doctor ; you have left the eight steps in the chamber-pot.

The man went home fully convinced of the Doctor's sagacity.

*Observations on Cs. Case.*

I have not examined the medicines in the above case ; but as Dr. MYERSBACH has in many instances, wherein I have been consulted, given steel and aloes in the form of pills, after declaring the liver to be affected, there is reason to presume the same were exhibited here also ; and if so, we may venture to say, he could not have administered any medicines more likely to aggravate the pains and other symptoms attending a stone in the bladder. The Doctor added to his pills frequent exercise, for a disease wherein every Physician in Europe would have recommended rest ; and from the inflammation and agonies which the medicines, or exercise, or both, produced, one may candidly conclude,

that



that a farther perseverance in the regimen recommended, would have produced such an aggravation of misery, as could have ended only with the life of this worthy young Gentleman. I cannot, even at this period, reflect upon the tortures he suffered without horror; as he frequently declared what a mercy he should think it, were death to close his sufferings. But are health and life to be trifled with? What conscience must that man possess, who indiscriminately exhibits the same medicine to every age, sex, and disease, when at the same time he knows he is ignorant of the science to which he pretends? Are there no laws to punish that man who robs another of health, the dearest blessing of life, without which life is a burthen?

Before I conclude, I shall notice a slight of hand, which has already deceived a considerable part of the town. It was observed in the preceeding case, with what velocity Dr. MYERSBACH moves his hands from one part of the body to the other, all the time saying "*the pain is here, the pain is here:*" by this means he must unavoidably, nine times in ten, approach near the part where the patient feels most pain, who immediately mentions where it is, and the Doctor replying that that was the part he meant, deceives the patient into a belief, that his disease, hitherto unknown, is now precisely discovered, and his admiration

admiration is equally excited by the manner in which the discovery is made.

### C A S E S VII, VIII, IX.

In March 1775, F. a Lady residing near Grace-church-street, who had been married a few months, and had been affected with slight hysteric complaints, attended Dr. MYERSBACH with a vial of urine: after he had looked at it, he told the patient she was ill of the venereal disease; and if she was married, it was given by her husband. When the shock, which such an unexpected decision had given her, was a little overcome, she returned home and acquainted the husband with this heavy charge upon his character: he accompanied his wife to two eminent gentlemen in the profession, to satisfy her of his perfect health, though she never harboured any suspicion of his fidelity. She was by this means convinced of the ignorance of this German oracle, and would not take his green drops and pills. She afterwards applied to a practitioner, who attributed her symptoms to pregnancy, and afforded her suitable relief. She is now the mother of a very fine girl, and both parents enjoy good health.

Before this discovery of Dr. MYERSBACH's ignorance, her father had put himself under his care, and likewise a lady of her acquaintance:



tance : the father, who was paralytic, daily grew worse, and at length had sense enough to free himself from an ignorant process ; and the lady, who was told she had got a dropfy, was happily delivered of a fine child : the Doctor, however, having insisted upon a dropfy, the lady neglected to provide proper cloathing for her infant, a circumstance, indeed, much easier to be supplied than a dropfy was to be removed.

These, supposed, different diseases were treated in one method, by green drops and pills.

#### C A S E X.

L. a Lady about 34, who, during the space of many months, had labored under an uneasy sensation in the region of the liver, with flying pains about the abdomen, and also under the clavicle of the same side, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH about the beginning of the year 1776, who upon looking at the urine, without asking a single question, declared “ *she* “ *had a disease in the kidneys, but that he would* “ *assuredly cure her.* He gave her his pills and green drops, which affording no relief, he added the red and white powders ; but the symptoms continuing equally violent, she was induced to apply to gentlemen of character in the profession, who advised such remedies as they judged most likely to remove the gall stones, which they supposed to be the cause  
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of the patient's complaint, and in which they were confirmed by the temporary jaundice that accompanied every violent attack, which she had undergone. Their practice was successful; many large gall stones were evacuated by stool, and the lady is now in much better health, happy in her escape from ignorance supported by impudence.

*Remarks on the above Case.*

The pain which is felt in the biliary ducts, is a proof of the inflammation to which those parts are liable; and therefore every additional stimulus must aggravate the pain, and encrease the danger of the patient's life. Stimulating pills were excellently calculated to answer these dismal effects, by augmenting the disease: and how far the evil might have been extended, can be conceived only by such as have felt the pangs of the stone, or those from biliary obstructions.

C A S E XI.

E. of Swan-street, Minories, 13 years of age, was attacked, about the middle of May, with a fever, accompanied with an acute pain in the head, and a vertigo, to such a degree, as rendered her incapable of moving in her room: at the commencement of this fever she was affected with hot and cold fits, which in a day or two recurred at more distant and



regular intervals, the fever usually returning in the evening and remitting towards morning. On the 24th. the family sent a vial of the patient's urine to Dr. MYERSBACH, who ordered his pills and green drops to be persevered in till she recovered; but the fever and delirium were daily so much augmented, as to induce the parents to desire my attendance about four days afterwards, when the symptoms were such as excited their tenderest and most alarming apprehensions. The pulse at this time beat 120 strokes in a minute, and felt hard; the head-ach was so excruciating, that stepping over the floor was almost intolerable, and so was the light; a cough attended, and delirium; and the little slumbers were disturbed with convulsive motions in the limbs, eyes, and muscles of the face. I saw that time was precious, and ordered cupping glasses to be immediately applied to the head and neck, by which several ounces of blood were procured. Antimonials and relaxants were the remedies I employed; and a cooling diet was adopted. At the commencement of June she was relieved from her complaints, and she went into the country to recruit her strength.

*Remarks on the foregoing Case.*

The fever which attacked this girl, was attended with such a delirium and acute head-ach, as appeared to me to threaten a rupture of some vessel in the head, which might end  
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in suppuration and death ; this consideration induced me to order the patient to be cupped ; and, with the loss of blood, the delirium ceased, and the head-ach and fever were greatly mitigated, as might be expected from the previous state of the pulse, the phrenitic delirium, and other symptoms.

The candid reader must perceive to what a precipice of danger this only child was exposed ; and will be ready to conclude, that if regular practice had not been requested at the very instant it was done, her life must have been the silent victim of presuming ignorance.

## C A S E XII.

T. of Charles-street, Hatton-Garden, 25 years old, of a thin spare habit of body, from some diminution of the usual discharges, was persuaded to have the opinion of Dr. MYERSBACH ; but her diffidence preventing her from attending in person with a vial of her own urine, a lady of her acquaintance accepted the office, and the Doctor, immediately after inspecting the urine, declared “ *the young woman was in a dropsy, but that he knew he could cure her.* ”

On the 11th of June I visited this unfortunate young woman ; it was then a week after



after the Doctor had sent his pills and green drops to remove this supposed dropfy. The appearance which she now made excited compassion and horror. She had kept abroad as usual before the German medicines had been taken. A cough had since ensued, with other hectic symptoms ; the stomach was racked by reaching ; the eyes were sunk ; and the feeble voice scarce able to relate the source of her miseries, from which I daily expected death would release her.

*Remarks on the above Case,*

The friend who presented the young lady's urine, observed to me, since she overcame her deception, that all other patient's, of different ages and sexes, were treated with the same pills and drops. Yet so deluded was she, by the positive assertion of Dr. MYERSBACH that he would cure this dropfy, as to administer to her friend these very medicines, which she knew had been given by the Doctor for very different complaints, an instance of which amongst others she gave in the case of a coachman in the neighbourhood.

This affords a striking proof to what a degree the human mind may be blinded, by the voluntary suppression of that reason, which if exerted in the least degree, might have detected the imposition. I ought to do justice in this place to a lady of my acquaintance who visited Dr. MYERSBACH a few weeks before

fore, with a vial of urine, and half a guinea, and received in return a direction for medicines, from his apothecary, amounting to eight shillings. She attended in the shop till her medicines were prepared, during which time she saw eighteen persons, *women, girls, boys, and men*, receive their respective medicines, which she observed were poured out of the same bottles; and this circumstance at once appeared such an evident mark of want of skill, and injurious discrimination, as to induce her to lose her money, rather than risk her future health; and she has not yet repented of her choice.

### CASE XIII.

F. a young Gentleman near the City-Road, at my request, waited on Dr. MYERS-BACH, on the 9th of June, with a vial containing about equal quantities of the urine of two persons in health: the Doctor, after shaking the bottle and smelling at its contents, passed his hands over different parts of F's body, at the same time telling him, "*the pain was here, or the pain was there;*" and that he might be more certain of stumbling upon some part affected, the Doctor likewise included the gentleman's head in the quick motion of his hands, and added, "*that he had taken too much mercury, which had ruined his constitution, without being cured of the disease*" for



“for which mercury had been given; but that he would cure him.”\* My friend, however, was in health, and had not taken any mercury during the last two years; the urine was mixed for the purpose; and, indeed, so ignorant is Dr. MYERSBACH of this fluid, that he has been several times deceived by persons, who have taken to him the urine of other sexes, as well as that of animals.

#### C A S E XIV.

*June the 12th, 1776.*

S. a young Gentleman in Holborn, of a hectic habit, but at this time without any urgent symptom, except remittent feverish heat, and a slight cough; applied to Dr. MYERSBACH, who assured him he had a scurvy in the kidneys, and gave him green drops and pills: after continuing these about a week, he thought himself much worse; the fever was encreased, the cough more violent, night sweats had come on, and great debility ensued; which induced him again to consult the German oracle, who insisted his patient was in a very favourable way, adding, that before the getting well, it was usual to be worse from the first use of medicine: the patient was

\* Besides his pills, he ordered the essence, spirit, and extract of wormwood, in the form of drops, similar to Case 4, p. 19.

was ordered to take the sweet drops, and to continue the other medicines, in hopes that as he had survived the first onset, the good effects were now to be expected; but after ten days further perseverance, he unfortunately found himself considerably in more danger, and this induced him to seek for relief in a rational manner: he applied to an apothecary in Gracechurch-street, who recommended such a course of medicine, that when I saw the patient, I made no alteration but in the article of diet.

#### C A S E XV.

In the beginning of June, 1776, T. W. of Bishopsgate-street, 40 years of age, applied to Dr. MYERSBACH for a swelling in his legs; the Doctor, after inspecting the urine, told him “ *it was obstructed slime in the kidneys,* “ *which he would remove.*” This he attempted to do by his green drops alone; but a few days after the patient returned with his thighs, as well as his legs, greatly tumified; the Doctor told him he was better, and that the disorder was moving downwards, and added the sweet drops, and the red powder, each to be taken three times every day; and every morning he gave a strong purging powder, for 21 days successively; at the end of which time the patient’s body became much enlarged, a fluctuation of water was evident, and a ge-

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neral anasarca spread over the body ; the breath was now labourious, the thirst intolerable, and death seemed approaching, although the German oracle would have perswaded the patient at the same time his cure was advancing : I saw him on the 26th, and am doubtful of his recovery. Dr. KOOYSTRA attended me in this visit, which was my first, and heard the patient relate the above particulars.

*Remarks on the above Case.*

I do not imagine that the green drops or tincture of tanfy, could have injured this patient ; neither do I lay much charge to the red powder, which is principally salt petre ; or to the sweet drops, which contain chiefly sugar ; but this I will venture to say, that in a dropsy and anasarca, like the present, where the patient was primarily feeble, the administering frequent strong purges, was the most dangerous practice that could have been adopted, and must soon have proved fatal, had not their use been interdicted ; the event, indeed, still appears unfavourable to this deluded man. I have known one strong purge prove fatal in a dropsy ; but is it not a species of manslaughter to exhibit one every day, till the miserable victim of ignorance sleeps in his grave ?

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§. IV.

SUCCESS of EMPIRICISM.

**T**HE skill of the best physician has been baffled by the obstinacy of some diseases, or the misconduct of patients or nurses. When a man is disappointed of a hasty cure, he often flies to pretenders in physic, and continues with more regularity the use of their medicines; and whether by length of time, in which nature cures herself, or by the random exhibition of a remedy, they sometimes gain the credit of a cure where regular practitioners have failed; and when such instances occur, they are blazed about in all companies, with a thousand wonderful additions, which captivate the attention of the ignorant, and delude their understanding: were the patient worse, or even destroyed, shame ensures silence, and public infamy is obviated.

Upon an average, out of every hundred patients, there is reason to suppose, eighty would be restored to health by the efforts of nature, without the use of medicine: out of the twenty remaining patients, suppose the empiric cures ten, and kills as many, there will be ninety remain to proclaim the character of the



Doctor, while the victims lie silent in the tomb. Had these hundred patients consulted a regular and rational physician, and every one had recovered, scarce a syllable of praise had been heard, and silent approbation alone must have rewarded his conscious heart. It is thus, that one successful case, under the management of an empiric, meets with ten times more reward, than the same success would have ensured to a man of skill and probity.

I remember an artful conjuror in the north of England, who raised an ample fortune from the ignorance of the country people, who came from several neighbouring counties to consult him. He tutored his son, a forward youth, to receive the votaries in an antichamber; and to propose such questions to them, as should extort the motives of their attendance; during which time the father placed himself behind a screen, so as to hear all the conversation. When the son had gained sufficient information, a certain tap on the screen was agreed upon as a signal to introduce the patient to the father, by the most indirect turnings the house afforded, into a remote apartment, where the father had previously retired, to repeat to the patients, on their entering the room, what the dialogue in the antichamber had furnished. By this device the Doctor acquired great reputation; he could tell the disease without the help of urine; and the deception was not known till he retired  
upon

upon his fortune, and disclosed his own stratagems.

I doubt not but the unaccountable method of discovering diseases, which water conjurors pretend to, is one means of recommending them to the confidence of weak minds, who admire every thing that is beyond their comprehension; though it is evident, from the circumstances above related, that Dr. MYERSBACH knows no more of urine than the patient, but to all kinds of diseases exhibits nearly the same medicines; and bad must they be indeed, if in some instances the patient does not meet with relief, especially as they are often directed to be persevered in for three months, during which period the change of weather, or the change in the patient's constitution, as has been already observed, may probably effect that cure which has been ascribed to the medicine.

It is curious to observe the arts made use of by the German Water-Doctor, to induce his patients to believe that he has discovered their disorders by their urine, as in case 6th. He sometimes runs his hands over the whole body, till the patient, whose mind is enfeebled by disease, or hurried by the evolutions performed about his body, fixes the seat of his pain, which the Doctor immediately repeats after him; and the deluded person, who has already surrendered up his judgment, is too much agitated



tated to discover, that what he told the Doctor, is only repeated to him ; and he goes away persuaded, that whatever he complained of was now first disclosed to him.

Sometimes the Doctor has ventured to guess at the disease, but I know no instance of his guessing right. He seems, indeed, so sensible of this, that he mostly does it with caution, and not till the eagerness of patients to tell their complaints, has afforded him some means of deceiving them.

In general, so far as I have remarked, he tells male patients that they have either a disease in the liver, or slime in the kidneys ; females, that they have a disorder in their womb ; and when they are young people, of either sex, that they have had the venereal disease. I am sorry to observe, that the fashionable vice of the age should be that which enables him to guess the last disease too often justly ; though, in the cases I have fairly related, he happened to guess wrong : but let the maladies be ever so various, nearly one universal sameness of treatment is pursued.

I have heard of some who have been cured by this method ; I think it probable ; and so would it have been had they taken camomile tea : but where one disease of any consequence has been remedied, I doubt not, I can produce ten that have been aggravated ; this engagement, however, I cannot fulfill, till well authenticated cases are produced.

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§. V.

## C O N C L U S I O N.

I Am unacquainted with Dr. MYERSBACH's person, though I have often been desir'd to meet him upon his own patients. I have not, to my knowledge, lost the attendance of one family by his practice, but I have acquired several by it; I have therefore no other inducement for writing the preceeding observations, but the public good. In every unhappy case, wherein I have followed Dr. MYERSBACH, my heart has bled over the folly of my fellow-creatures, and lamented that confidence which any thing out of the path of reason and common sense has inspired.

Throughout these observations I have given this foreigner the title of Doctor, agreeable to public appellation. It is not material to the world, whether this title has been conferred, or is only assumed; it is from serious facts which I have seen, or from the relations of patients or their friends, that I have drawn my conclusions, and therefore have avoided all reflections on his origin and education, with which, I presume, many persons are already well acquainted.



I wish only to appeal to the sober sense of the public, how far I have supported the character of an honest man, and of a conscientious physician.

I am sensible that what I have written cannot affect the independence of Dr. MYERSBACH, who has, as I am well informed, already made a princely fortune, which probably he will soon return to Germany to enjoy, with many a hearty laugh at English credulity: happy would it be for numerous individuals, if their implicit confidence should not deserve commiseration more than ridicule!

The reputation of AILHAUD'S\* POWDERS is recent in every person's memory; so rapid once was their sale, that the vender was soon enabled to purchase three baronies, though at the expence of many deluded victims, as the experience of the celebrated Dr. TISSOT fully evinces, with whose remarks I shall conclude this performance.

“ Fortunately for the human species, but few  
 “ nostrums have attained an equal reputation  
 “ with the Powders of AILHAUD, an inhabitant  
 “ of Aix, in Provence, and unworthy the name  
 “ of a Physician; who has overrun Europe for  
 “ some years past with a violent purge, the re-  
 membrance

“ membrane of which will not be effaced be-  
 “ fore the extinction of all its victims. I have  
 “ for a long time past attended several patients,  
 “ whose disorders I can only palliate, without  
 “ hope of ever curing them; and who owe  
 “ their present melancholy state of body to no-  
 “ thing but the manifest consequences of these  
 “ powders; and I have actually seen, very late-  
 “ ly, two persons who have been cruelly poi-  
 “ soned by them. A French physician, as  
 “ eminent for his talents and science as esti-  
 “ mable for his moral character, has published  
 “ some of the tragical consequences which these  
 “ powders have occasioned; and were a col-  
 “ lection made of their effects, in every place  
 “ where the use of them has been introduced,  
 “ the size of the volume would be enormous,  
 “ and the contents *horrible indeed*.

P. S. While the preceeding observations  
 were in the press, six of Dr. MYERSBACH's pa-  
 tients have consulted me, whose cases, with  
 those of many others, may afford an oppor-  
 tunity of more fully authenticating the virtues  
 of the German medicines.

Whilst this sheet, with the above postscript,  
 was waiting for correction in the press, three  
 additional cases have come under my cogni-  
 zance: one of these was a rheumatic patient,  
 who informed me that he had been for se-  
 veral weeks under the care of Dr. MYERS-



BACH, and had taken green drops and pills without relief: the Doctor, he added, after viewing his urine, assured him, that his disorder was *slime in the blood and kidneys*. Another was a Lady in Thames-street, who also applied, with a vial of urine, to this water oracle; on inspection of which, he declared, *that the disease was in the stomach*: his usual remedies, however, not removing her complaints; she consulted a gentleman who is an honour to his profession, and he very soon after cured *this disease in the stomach*, by delivering her of two children. The last was a young Man of amiable character, whom the Doctor accused of the *venereal disease*, for no other reason, that I could discover, than his being young; and respecting only the age of the patient, he was as likely to guess right by mentioning that complaint as any other.

F I N I S.